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Clinton Responds to Paul's Call for Open Markets

Washington, D.C. - Late last week, the Clinton Administration responded to a letter from Congressman Ron Paul calling for the opening of markets in Iran by lifting sanctions on imports of Iranian carpets, dried fruit, nuts and caviar. Although it only applies to a few products, Paul believes it is a step in the right direction. "It is time for a foreign policy which encourages trade and peaceful engagement with all people throughout the world," Paul said. "People of the agricultural industry in the U.S. are far ahead of Washington bureaucrats on this issue, as they have long ago awakened to the fact that sanctions and embargoes result in detrimental consequences to U.S. agriculture. I will continue to seek the total removal of all sanctions in Iran, but I am pleased with the first steps the President has taken in response to my request." U.S. sanctions in Iran have hurt domestic companies who have lost profits while European companies have reaped the benefits of their contracts with Iran. Paul said the time is right for a total removal of trade restrictions so that all aspects of the U.S. economy, especially the agriculture community, can prosper. "Last year, we made significant changes to our foreign policy by permitting the sale of food and medicine to specified countries, including Iran, on a case by case basis," said Paul. "With last week's developments, now is the perfect time for a total removal of all sanctions in Iran. Only then will all segments of our economy prosper." The opening of markets in Iran comes on the heels of the creation of the Congressional Rural Caucus earlier in the week. Paul was a co-founder of the bipartisan group formed to promote legislation that will encourage economic development and help the agriculture industry in rural America. One of Paul's goals in joining the Caucus was the opening of world markets to U.S. agriculture products. Said Paul, "In spite of a strong economy, many in the agriculture business are struggling to make ends meet because of policies that are not conducive to doing business. We need to level the playing field, so that those in the agriculture community can reap the benefits of a healthy economy. The lifting of some sanctions last week was an important victory. I will continue to promote legislation and policies to support farmers and ranchers in my district in rural Texas and all over rural America."

